



## Safely Removing Debris

Many across the Commonwealth are faced now with cleaning up debris from the recent October 29-30 Nor'easter. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency offers some suggestions that may help.

- Local, state, and federal agencies are not authorized to remove debris from private property except in situations where the debris is deemed to pose an extraordinary threat to human health and safety.
- Property owners should make sure their debris piles do not block the right-of-way; obstruct fire hydrants or utility meters; or block drains or ditches which can cause a risk of flooding.
- People who are physically unable to move debris on private property, and who cannot hire a private company to move the debris, should contact their local government or local charitable organizations. Volunteer groups may help the elderly and incapacitated with clear debris from driveways and walks, general yard and property clean up, and hauling.
- If debris is too large, property owners may need to hire a debris removal contractor. Before hiring anyone, they should check with their insurance company to find out if their policy covers debris removal.
- Local, state and federal governments do not recommend or endorse any contractor. Property owners should be suspicious of any contractor who says, or presents literature, saying that they are working for or endorsed by any government agency.
- Beware of any contractor who uses high-pressure sales tactics or requires full payment up front. Have everything in writing.
- Unfortunately, in the wake of a storm, fly-by-night businesses will solicit this type of work, often door-to-door trying to take advantage of unsuspecting homeowners.

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